

MEMOIRS
OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF
PENNSYLVANIA.

MEMOIRS, ETC.

PAPERS RELATIVE TO THE VALEDICTORY ADDRESS OF PRESIDENT WASHINGTON.

At a meeting of "*The Historical Society of Pennsylvania*," held this 6th day of February, 1826,

A communication was read by the President upon the subject of the Valedictory Address of President Washington —

Whereupon,

Resolved, That the communication of the President be referred to a committee, with instructions to make such further enquiries as they may deem expedient and find practicable.

And the President, and Mr. Morgan and Mr. Ingersoll, were appointed the committee.

From the Minutes.

T. M. PETTIT, *Recording Secretary*.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

The committee charged to make such enquiries as they might deem expedient and find practicable in relation to the Valedictory Address of President Washington, beg leave to report —

That in the execution of this duty they have felt all the interest which the subject has excited among so many of our fellow-citizens. Although the merits of this illustrious man would be very little impaired by the discovery that he had made use of the hand of another to reduce his own thoughts and reflections to writing, yet when the effort appears to be to ascribe to some other the merit of these thoughts and the sense of the utility of their publication, and thus to render George Washington a mere secondary character, a warmth of feeling among those who loved and revered him has been unavoidably excited, and may be reasonably excused.

The committee have troubled Mr. Jay, Chief Justice Marshall, Judge Peters, and Judge Washington, with enquiries. The answers which have been kindly returned, with permission to make them public, must remove all doubts on the subject. The facts stated in Mr. Jay's

The original manuscript of the "Farewell Address" was upon Mr. Claypoole's death sold at auction, in Philadelphia, by his representatives, and purchased by Mr. James Lenox, of New York, who printed an edition of a limited number of copies for private distribution, following the text as hitherto published, but noting from the manuscript the alterations and corrections of the illustrious author.—
EDITOR.

letter to Judge Peters well account for the *mistake* which has accompanied this question. The whole address appears to have been copied by General Hamilton, whose affectionate attachment to the President prevented him from thinking any trouble on his account too great; and this copy having, we know not how, returned to his possession, was probably the cause of the opinion that he was the original author. His unexpected and lamented death prevents that personal denial of his asserted agency which we should undoubtedly have received if the report had been circulated during his lifetime. The national loss sustained in regard to both is sufficiently heavy. It requires not to be rendered more distressing by attempts to convict one of intellectual deficiency, and the other of confidence betrayed.

The certificate from Mr. Claypoole, with the short confirmatory note of the President of this Society, will not, it is conceived, be improper additions to the publication of the foregoing letters.

W. RAWLE,
BENJ'N R. MORGAN,
C. J. INGERSOLL.

LETTER FROM THE COMMITTEE.

SIR,

The interest which has lately been taken by so many in the question whether the Valedictory Address of the venerable Washington was his own composition or the

work of another, has extended to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, which has appointed us to make enquiries on the subject.

We take the liberty of applying, among others, to you, sir, and request you to favor us with any information in your possession not improper for publication.

We are, &c.

(Signed),

W. RAWLE,
BENJAMIN R. MORGAN,
CHARLES J. INGERSOLL.

Philada, Feb. 10, 1826.

A copy of the above was addressed to Judge WASHINGTON, Judge PETERS, Chief Justice MARSHALL, JOHN JAY, Esq., and RUFUS KING, Esq.

The following answers have been received. The indisposition of Mr. King has probably been the cause of no answer being returned by him.

Washington, Feb. 23, 1826.

GENTLEMEN,

In answer to your letter, requesting such information on the subject of the Valedictory Address which was published in 1796, with the signature of George Washington, as it may be in my power to give, I beg leave to state that the papers bequeathed to me, so far as I have examined them, afford no ground whatever for attributing the composition of that paper to any other than the person whose signature it bears. I have heard that a claim to the authorship of it, by another person, has been

asserted, but I am unacquainted with the precise ground upon which it is founded.

I am, very respectfully, gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant,

BUSH. WASHINGTON.

Washington, Feb. 22d, 1826.

GENTLEMEN,

I have been honored with your letter of the 15th inst., enquiring whether I have any materials to furnish, or testimony to afford, respecting the Valedictory Address of General Washington, or the doubts which have been raised on the subject of its authorship.

I have no information on the claims which have been made for others to the composition of this address, nor do I know anything, except from public report, which is not in the correspondence that was placed in my hands. I have seen nothing there to induce a suspicion that it was written by any other than its avowed author.

With great respect,

I am, gentlemen, your obedient,

J. MARSHALL.

Bedford, 21st Feb., 1826.

GENTLEMEN,

I received on the 18th of this month the letter which you were pleased to address to me on the 10th inst. That letter suggests, that "the interest which has lately

been taken by so many in the question, whether the Valedictory Address of the venerable Washington was his own composition, or the work of another, has extended to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, which has appointed you a committee to make enquiries on the subject." You therefore request that I will favor you "with any information in my possession, not improper for publication." To this request propriety requires from me a candid and explicit answer.

The first intelligence I had, relative to the *question* to which you allude, was in the year 1811. In the course of my familiar correspondence with my worthy and excellent friend, Judge Peters, I did on the 29th of March, 1811, write a letter to that gentleman, containing certain remarks and facts connected with that *question*.

I therefore take the liberty to refer you to Judge Peters, who will readily communicate to you the contents of that letter. Permit me to add, that should any copies be taken, it is my desire that they may be copies of the *whole*, and not merely of *parts* of the letter.

I have the honor to be, gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN JAY.

W. RAWLE,	}	Esquires,
BENJAMIN R. MORGAN,		
C. J. INGERSOLL,		

Committee of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Belmont, Feb. 19, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

I thought it most prudent to avoid encountering the bad weather to-day, and have ordered the Court to be adjourned to Friday by the Marshal.

I will immediately write to my friend Jay, and inform him of your request in relation to his letters respecting General Washington's Farewell Address. I cannot deliver his letters to any one without his permission.

It is a strange pursuit in Hamilton's family, thus to give trouble to everybody who regards the fame of either the General or Col. H. himself. If he had written the Address, it is perfidy to betray the confidence reposed in him. But as he did not, it is wrong in his family to assert his having done it. In either case his descendants would gain no reputation; but our nation would suffer a serious injury, by having the fascinating name of *Washington* taken from the creed of every friend to his country.

Yours, most affectionately,

RICHARD PETERS.

W. RAWLE, Esq.

*Bedford, West-Chester County, N. York,
3d March, 1826.*

MY GOOD FRIEND,

I had the pleasure of receiving, on Saturday last, your letter of the 21st of February. It gratified me to learn

from it, that you was in excellent health, and I hope that a kind Providence will continue to promote your prosperity.

The communications which had occurred between you and the committee of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania were interesting. In a letter from them of the 10th ult. they expressed a desire to obtain from me any information in my possession, not improper for publication. I answered it on the 24th, and referred to the contents of my letter to you of the 24th of March, 1811. Should any copies be taken, I hope they will be taken in the whole, and not of only parts of that letter. As to publication, you and those gentlemen can, with more facility than I can, consider and conclude on that head.

I regret leaving so much blank paper in this letter, but so it is — from early in the summer to this time, my long-continued sickness and debility have become so increased that writing soon produces weariness. I cannot, however, forbear adding my assurances of the constant esteem, regard and attachment, with which I am,

Dear sir,

Your affectionate friend,

JOHN JAY.

The Hon. RICHARD PETERS, Esq.

(COPY.)

Bedford, March 29th, 1811.

DEAR SIR :

I have received your letter of the 14th ult., and also the book on Plaister of Paris, which you was so obliging as to send me, and for which accept my thanks.

Your letter conveyed to me the first and only information I have received that a copy of President Washington's Valedictory Address had been found among the papers of General Hamilton, and in *his* handwriting; and that a certain gentleman had also a copy of it, in the *same* handwriting.

This intelligence is unpleasant and unexpected. Had the address been one of those *official* papers which, in the course of affairs, the Secretary of the proper department might have prepared, and the President have signed, these facts would have been unimportant; but it was a *personal* act, of choice, not of official duty, and it was so connected with other obvious considerations as that he only could with propriety write it. In my opinion, President Washington must have been sensible of this propriety, and therefore strong evidence would be necessary to make me believe that he violated it. Whether he did or did not, is a question which naturally directs our attention to whatever affords presumptive evidence respecting it, and leads the mind into a long train of correspondent reflections. I will give you a summary of those which have occurred to me; not because I think them

necessary to settle the point in question, for the sequel will show that they are not, but because the occasion invites me to take the pleasure of reviewing and bearing testimony to the merits of our departed friend.

Is it to be presumed from these facts that General Hamilton was the *real*, and the President only the *reputed* author of that address? Although they countenance such a presumption, yet I think its foundation will be found too slight and shallow to resist that strong and full stream of counter-evidence which flows from the conduct and character of that great man: a character not blown up into transient splendor by the breath of adulation, but which, being composed of his great and memorable deeds, stands, and will forever stand, a glorious monument of human excellence.

So prone, however, is "poor human nature" to dislike and depreciate the superiority of its cotemporaries, that when these facts come to be generally known (and generally known they will be), many, with affected regret and hesitation, will infer and hint that Washington had less greatness of talent and less greatness of mind than his friends and admirers ascribed to him. Nor will the number of those be few, who, from personal or party inducements, will artfully encourage and diligently endeavor to give currency to such imputations. On the other hand, there are men of candor and judgment (and time will increase their number), who, aiming only at truth, will cheerfully trace and follow its footsteps, and, on finding, gladly embrace it. Urged by this laudable motive, they will attentively examine the history of his

life; and in it they will meet with such numerous proofs of his knowledge and experience of men and things in general, and of our national affairs in particular, as to silence all doubts of his ability to conceive and express every idea in that address. A careful perusal of that history will convince them that the principles of policy which it recommends as rules for the conduct of others, are precisely those by which he regulated his own.

There have been in the world but two systems or schools of policy,—the one founded on the great principles of wisdom and rectitude, the other on cunning and its various artifices. To the first of these belonged Washington, and all the other worthies of every country who ascended to the Temple of Honor through the Temple of Virtue. The doctrines, maxims, and precepts of this school have been explained and inculcated by the ablest writers, ancient and modern. In all civilized countries, they are known, though often neglected; and in free States, have always been publicly commended and taught: they crossed the Atlantic with our forefathers, and, in our days particularly, have not only engaged the time and attention of students, but have been constantly and eloquently displayed by able men in our Senates and Assemblies. What reason can there be to suppose that Washington did not understand those subjects? If it be asked what these subjects comprehend or relate to, the answer is this,—they relate to the nature and duties of man, to his propensities and passions, his virtues and vices, his habits and prejudices, his real and relative wants and enjoyments, his capacities for social and

national happiness, and the means by which, according to time, place, and other existing circumstances, it is in a greater or less degree to be procured, preserved, and increased. From a profound investigation of these subjects, enlightened by experience, result all that knowledge and those maxims and precepts of sound policy which enable legislators and rulers to manage and govern public affairs wisely and justly.

By what other means than the practical use of this knowledge, could Washington have been able to lead and govern an army hastily collected from various parts, and who brought with them to the field all the license and all the habits which they had indulged at home? Could he, by the force of orders and proclamations, have constrained them to render to him that obedience, confidence, and warm attachment which he soon acquired, and which, throughout all vicissitudes and distresses, continued constant and undiminished to the last? By what other means could he have been able to frustrate the designs of dark cabals, and the unceasing intrigues of envious competitors, and the arts of the opposing enemy? By what other means could he have been able in so masterly a manner to meet and manage all those perplexing embarrassments which the revolutionary substitution of a new government,—which the want of that power in Congress which they had not, and of that promptitude which no deliberative body can have,—which the frequent destitution and constant uncertainty of essential supplies,—which the incompetency of individuals on whom much depended, the perfidy of others, and the mis-

management of many, could not fail to engender? We know, and history will inform posterity, that, from the first of his military career, he had to meet and encounter and surmount a rapid succession of formidable difficulties, even down to the time when his country was enabled, by the success of their arms, to obtain the honorable peace which terminated the war. His high and appointed course being then finished, he disdained the intimations of lawless ambition to prolong it. He disbanded the army under circumstances which required no common degree of policy or virtue; and with universal admiration and plaudits, descended joyfully and serenely into the shades of retirement. They who ascribe all this to the guidance and protection of Providence do well, but let them recollect that Providence seldom interposes in human affairs, but through the agency of human means.

When, at a subsequent and alarming period, the nation found that their affairs had gone into confusion, and that clouds portending danger and distress were rising over them in every quarter, they instituted under his auspices a more efficient government, and unanimously committed the administration of it to him. Would they have done this without the highest confidence in his political talents and wisdom? Certainly not,—no novice in navigation was ever unanimously called upon to take the helm or command of a ship on the point of running aground among the breakers. This universal confidence would have proved a universal mistake, had it not been justified by the event. The unanimous opinion entertained and declared by a whole people in favor of any fellow citizen

is rarely erroneous, especially in times of alarm and calamity.

To delineate the course, and enumerate the measures which he took to arrive at success, would be to write a volume. The firmness and policy with which he overcame the obstacles placed in his way by the derangement of national affairs, by the devices of domestic demagogues and of foreign agents, as well as by the deleterious influences of the French Revolution, need not be particularized. Our records, and histories, and memories, render it unnecessary. It is sufficient to say, and it can be said with truth, that his administration raised the nation out of confusion into order, out of degradation and distress into reputation and prosperity: it found us withering; it left us flourishing.

Is it to be believed that, after having thus led the nation out of a bewildered state, and guided them for many years from one degree of prosperity to another, he was not qualified, on retiring, to advise them how to proceed and go on? And what but this is the object and the burthen of his Valedictory Address? He was persuaded that, as the national welfare had been recovered and established, so it could only be preserved and prolonged by a continued and steady adherence to those principles of sound policy and impartial justice which had invariably directed his administration.

Although the knowledge of them had been spread and scattered among the people, here a little, and there a little, yet being desirous to mark even the last day of his public life by some act of public utility, he addressed and

presented them to his fellow-citizens in points of light so clear and strong as to make deep impressions on the public mind. These last parental admonitions of this Father of his Country were gratefully received and universally admired; but the experience of ages informs us, that it is less difficult to give good advice than to prevail on men to follow it.

Such, and so obvious is the force of the preceding considerations, as to render doubts of the President's ability to give the advice contained in the address too absurd to have many serious advocates. But it would not surprise me, if certain classical gentlemen, associating the facts you mention with the style and fashion of the address, should intimate that his ability to compose it substantially in his mind does not prove that he was also capable of communicating his advice in a paper so well written. Let these gentlemen recollect the classical maxim which they learned at school :

"Scribendi recte, sapere est, et principium, et fons."

They may also be referred to another classical maxim, which teaches us that they who well understand their subject will be at no loss for words :

"Verbaque provisum rem non invita sequentur."

But his ability to write well need not be proved by the application of maxims, it is established by facts.

We are told to judge of a tree by its fruit; let us in

like manner judge of his pen by its performances. Few men who had so little leisure have written so much. His *public* letters alone are voluminous, and public opinion has done justice to their merits. Many of them have been published, and they who read them will be convinced that at the period of the address he had not to learn how to write well. But it may be remarked that the address is more highly finished than the letters, and so it ought to be. That address was to be presented to the whole nation, and on no common occasion; it was intended for the present and future generations; it was to be read in this country and in foreign countries; and to be criticized not only by affectionate friends and impartial judges, but also by envious and malignant enemies. It was an address which, according as it should or should not correspond with his exalted character and fame, would either justify or impeach the prevailing opinion of his talents or wisdom. Who, therefore, can wonder that he should bestow more thought, and time, and pains, on that address than on a letter?

Although in the habit of depending ultimately on his own judgment, yet no man was more solicitous to obtain and collect light on every question and measure on which he had to decide. He knew that authors, like parents, are not among the first to discover imperfections in their offspring, and that consideration would naturally induce him to imitate the example of those ancient and modern writers (among whom were statesmen, generals, and even men of consular and royal dignity), who submitted their compositions to the judgment of their friends before they

put the last hand to them. Those friends would make notes of whatever defects they observed in the draft, and of the correspondent amendments which they deemed proper. If they found that the arrangement would be improved, they would advise certain transpositions; if the connection between any of the relative parts was obscure, they would make it more apparent; if a conclusion had better be left to implication than expressed, they would strike it out, and so vice versa, if an additional remark or allusion would give force or light to a sentiment or proposition, they would propose it; where a sentence was too long, they would divide it; they would correct redundancies, change words less apt for words more apt, &c. &c. &c. To correct a composition in this way is to do a friendly office, but to prepare a new one, and offer it to the author as a substitute for his own, would deserve a different appellation.

Among those to whose judgment and candor President Washington would commit such an interesting and delicate task, where is the man to be found who would have had the hardihood to say to him in substance, though in terms ever so nice and courtly: "Sir, I have examined and considered your draft of an address—it will not do, it is really good for nothing, but, sir, I have taken the trouble to write a proper one for you, and I now make you a present of it. I advise you to adopt it, and to pass it on the world as your own; the cheat will never be discovered, for you may depend on my secrecy. Sir, I have inserted in it a paragraph that will give the public a good

opinion of your modesty. I will read it to you; it is in these words:

“‘In the discharge of this trust I will only say, that I have with good intentions contributed towards the organization and administration of the government, the best exertions of which *a very fallible judgment* was capable. Not unconscious in the outset of the *inferiority* of my qualifications, experience in my own eyes, perhaps *still more* in the eyes of *others*, has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself.’”

If it be possible to find a man among those whom he esteemed capable of offering to him such a present, it is impossible to believe that President Washington was the man to whom such a present would have been acceptable. They who knew President Washington and his various endowments, qualifications and virtues, know that (aggregately considered) they formed a *tout ensemble* which has rarely been equalled, and perhaps never excelled.

Thus much for presumptive evidence, I will now turn your attention to some that is direct.

The history (if it may be so called) of the address is not unknown to me; but as I came to the knowledge of it under implied confidence, I doubted, when I first received your letter, whether I ought to disclose it. On more mature reflection I became convinced that if President Washington were now alive, and informed of the facts in question, he would not only authorize, but also desire me to reduce it to writing; that when necessary it might be used to invalidate the imputations to which those facts give color.

This consideration terminated my doubts. I do not think that a disclosure is necessary at this moment, but I fear such a moment will arrive. Whether I shall then be alive, or in capacity to give testimony is so uncertain, that in order to avoid the risque of either, I shall now reduce it to writing, and commit it to your care and discretion, "*De bene esse*," as the lawyers say.

Some time before the address appeared, Colonel (afterwards General) Hamilton informed me that he had received a letter from President Washington, and with it the draft of a Farewell Address, which the President had prepared, and on which he requested our opinion. He then proposed that we should fix on a day for an interview at my house on the subject. A day was accordingly appointed, and on that day Col. Hamilton attended. He observed to me in words to this effect, that after having read and examined the draft, it appeared to him to be susceptible of improvement. That he thought the easiest and best way was to leave the draft untouched, and in its fair state; and to write the whole over with such amendments, alterations, and corrections as he thought were advisable, and that he had done so; he then proposed to read it, and to make it the subject of our consideration. This being agreed to, he read it, and we proceeded deliberately to discuss and consider it, paragraph by paragraph, until the whole met with our mutual approbation. Some amendments were made during the interview, but none of much importance.

Although this business had not been hastily dispatched, yet aware of the consequence of such a paper, I suggested

the giving it a further critical examination; but he declined it, saying he was pressed for time, and was anxious to return the draft to the President without delay.

It afterwards occurred to me that a certain proposition was expressed in terms too general and unqualified; and I hinted it in a letter to the President. As the business took the course above mentioned, a recurrence to the draft was unnecessary, and it was not read. There was this advantage in the course pursued; the President's draft remained (as delicacy required) fair and not obscured by interlineations, &c. By comparing it with the paper sent with it, he would immediately observe the particular emendations and corrections that were proposed, and would find them standing in their intended places. Hence he was enabled to review, and to decide on the whole matter, with much greater clearness and facility than if he had received them in separate and detached notes, and with detailed references to the pages and lines, where they were advised to be introduced.

With great esteem and regard,

I am, dear sir,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN JAY.

The Honorable RICHARD PETERS, Esq.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM
JUDGE PETERS TO MR. RAWLE.

Belmont, Feb. 26th, 1826.

“At the head of my obituary list stands our venerated and beloved chief, who was always particularly communicative with me. I am certain that, in conversations, I have heard from his own lips, most, if not all, the leading sentiments expressed in the Farewell Address; though I do not recollect any *special* discussion on the subject. I did understand at the time that he had submitted his draft to some friends, but had not the exact information which Mr. Jay developes. In my official capacity, during the revolution, I have received many letters from the General, written by members of his family and signed by him. But these were all about the *routine* business of the department. Whenever there was anything of special confidence, he wrote the whole. With Col. Hamilton I have often conversed on the flying stories of the day, as to the great assistance he received from his family in composition of letters, papers, &c. Col. H. always scouted the idea of *their* doing more than taking off the laborious drudgery of current business, and always gave the General the merit of being the unassisted writer of important compositions and correspondence.”

The committee subsequently addressed the following letter to Nicholas Fish, Esq., of New York.

SIR,

Having been appointed by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania a committee to collect and report to them such evidence as may be attainable in respect to the original author of the Valedictory Address of President Washington in 1796, we have made several enquiries on the subject.

We now take the liberty of addressing you as the surviving executor of General Hamilton, and probably in possession of most of his papers. It has been supposed by some, that the address was originally composed by General Hamilton. Our impressions from all the information that we have been able to collect are to the contrary. It appears to us that the original draught was the sole work of the President, but submitted by him to his friends, Mr. Jay and General Hamilton, for revision. But in justice to the friends of General Hamilton (and we beg you to consider us as having the highest respect for his memory), we should think it improper to make a report which will probably be published without a previous enquiry in that quarter, where, if erroneous impressions have been received by us, they are most likely to be corrected.

We therefore beg the favor of you, sir, to communicate any facts which you will think proper for publication in the next volume of the memoirs of the society, tending

to show that, in your opinion, this address was not the original composition of the President, but of some other, and what person.

We are, &c.,

W. RAWLE,
BENJ. R. MORGAN,
C. J. INGERSOLL.

To NICHOLAS FISH, Esq.

ANSWER.

New York, May 15th, 1826.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th ultimo, on the subject of General Washington's Valedictory Address, and at the same time to offer you an apology for having so long delayed answering it.

You say it has been supposed by some that the address was originally composed by General Hamilton, but that your impressions, from all the information that you have been able to collect, are to the contrary, and that you should think it improper to make a report which will probably be published, without a previous enquiry in that quarter, where, if erroneous impressions have been received by you, they are most likely to be corrected; that you therefore address me, as the surviving executor of General Hamilton, supposing it probable that I am in

possession of most of his papers, and requesting me to communicate any facts I may think proper for publication in the next volume of the memoirs of the society, tending to show that in my opinion this was not the original composition of President Washington, but of some other, and what person.

None of General Hamilton's papers are in my possession, but some of his papers relating to the subject of your enquiry are supposed by the General's family to be in the hands of the Hon. Rufus King, our Minister to London, against whom a suit in chancery was instituted previous to his departure on his mission, for the recovery of them; to which suit I am pro forma a party. As to my personal knowledge on this subject, I freely avow that I am not possessed of any fact tending to show that the original draft of Washington's Valedictory Address was written by any other person than himself.

I have the honor to be, gentlemen,

With great consideration,

Your obedient servant,

NICHOLAS FISH.

To W. RAWLE,

BENJAMIN R. MORGAN, } Esquires,

C. J. INGERSOLL,

Committee appointed by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to collect and report to them such evidence as may be attainable in respect to the original author of the Valedictory Address of President Washington in 1796.

Having been requested by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to give an account of the circumstances attending the first publication of the Valedictory Address of the late President Washington to the people of the United States, I will now state them, as accurately as my memory enables me.

A few days before the appearance of this memorable document in print, I received a message from the President, by his private secretary, signifying his desire to see me. I waited on him at the appointed time, and found him sitting alone in the drawing-room. He received me kindly; and, after I had paid my respects to him, desired me to take a seat near him,—then, addressing himself to me, said, that he had for some time past contemplated retiring from public life, and had at length concluded to do so at the end of the (then) present term: that he had some thoughts and reflections on the occasion, which he deemed proper to communicate to the people of the United States, in the form of an Address, and which he wished to appear in the Daily Advertiser, of which I was editor. He paused, and I took the opportunity of thanking him for having preferred that paper as the channel of his communication with the people, especially as I viewed this selection as indicating his approbation of the principles and manner in which the work was conducted. He silently assented, and asked when the publication could be made. I answered, that the time should be made perfectly convenient to himself, and the following Monday was fixed on: he then told me that his secretary

would call on me with a copy of the Address on the next (Friday) morning, and I withdrew.

After the *proof sheet* had been compared with the copy, and corrected by myself, I carried another *proof*, and then a *revise*, to be examined by the President, who made but few alterations from the original, except in the punctuation, in which he was very minute.

The publication of the Address, dated "United States, September 17th, 1796," being completed on the 19th, I waited on the President with the original; and, in presenting it to him, expressed my regret at parting with it, and how much I should be gratified by being permitted to retain it: upon which, in an obliging manner, he handed it back to me, saying that if I wished for it, I might keep it; and I then took my leave of him.

Any person acquainted with the handwriting of President Washington, would, on seeing this specimen, at once recognize it. And, as I had formerly been honored by written communications from him on public business, I may say that his handwriting was familiar to me; and I think I could at any time and without hesitation identify it. The manuscript copy consists of thirty-two pages of quarto letter paper, sewed together as a book, and with many alterations; as, in some places, whole paragraphs are erased and others substituted, in others many lines struck out, in others sentences and words erased, and others interlined in their stead. The tenth, eleventh, and sixteenth pages are almost entirely expunged, saving only a few lines; and one-half of the thirty-first page is also effaced. A critical examination will show that the

whole, from first to last, with all its numerous corrections, was the work of the same hand; and I can confidently affirm, that no other pen ever touched the manuscript, now in my possession, than that of the great and good man whose signature it bears.

D. C. CLAYPOOLE.

Philadelphia, February 22d, 1826.

To the foregoing statement of Mr. Claypoole (whose fair and honorable character is well established among us), I think it not improper to add, that I have carefully examined the manuscript from beginning to end; and being well acquainted with the handwriting of this eminent personage, I am entirely satisfied that there is not a word in the text written by any other than himself. I had a doubt only as to the *date*, which did not, as it appeared to me, exactly correspond with the rest, but on further examination, I am induced to think that it is all in the same writing; in which opinion, Mr. Claypoole fully coincides. At all events, I am perfectly satisfied that it is not in the handwriting of General Hamilton, with which I am also well acquainted. The date may have possibly been by the private Secretary of the President.

W. RAWLE.

Feb. 22d, 1826.